

MINUTES

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING OF THE AGAWAM CITY COUNCIL

JANUARY 7, 2008

President Rheault – Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to Monday, January 7th's Council Meeting.

Item 1. Citizen's Speak Time

President Rheault - Barbara, is there anybody wishing to speak? No. Okay.

Item 2. Roll Call

President Rheault - Will the Clerk please call the roll?

ROLL CALL – 11 Present.

President Rheault – 11 Present. We have a full quorum.

Item 3. Moment of Silence and the Pledge of Allegiance

President Rheault – Please rise for a Moment of Silence and Pledge of Allegiance.

Item 4. Minutes

Item 5. Declaration from Council President

President Rheault – Just a reminder this is a meeting purely organizational for the election of the City Council President and Vice President. There will be no other business for the Council this evening. The reason why I sit in chair is because the Council Rules stipulate the oldest member of the Council in years which is me has that distinct honor. So we will go down to Item number 8.

Item 6. Presentation of Petitions, Memorials & Remonstrances

Item 7. Report of Council Committees

Item 8. Elections

(a) TE-2008-1 - Election of City Council President

President Rheault – The floor is open for nominations. I'm sorry. I'm looking at my notes. Councilor Mineo?

Councilor Mineo – Yea. I'd like to nominate Gina Letellier.

President Rheault – Gina Letellier has been nominated. Councilor Calabrese?

Councilor Calabrese – I was just gonna second that nomination.

President Rheault – Seconds are not necessary. Councilor Rossi?

Councilor Rossi – I'd like to nominate Don Rheault.

President Rheault – Donald Rheault has been nominated as well. Any other nominations? If not, I'll entertain a Motion to close. Moved by Councilor Simpson, seconded by Councilor Perry. All those in favor? Opposed? Nominations are closed. Will the Clerk please...any discussion? If not, Clerk please call the roll by stating the last name is sufficient.

ROLL CALL – Gina Letellier 8, Donald Rheault 3

President Rheault – Eight Letellier, three for Rheault. Councilor Letellier is your newly elected Council President. Do you wish to come and take the gavel?

Councilor Letellier – No that's...you can finish the evening.

President Rheault – You want me to finish? Okay.

(b) TE-2008-2 - Election of City Council Vice President

President Rheault – Councilor Letellier?

Councilor Letellier - Thank you. I nominate Councilor Cecilia Calabrese.

President Rheault – Councilor Calabrese is nominated. From the Chair, it is with great pleasure and confidence of Jill Simpson in nomination this evening for City Council Vice President. And I'd like to add a couple of words to that. I have come to gain a great respect for Jill Simpson's service on the Agawam City Council. No fanfare, no headline seeking, no political posturing, just dedicated service to her community. I have taken notice and certainly admire her sense of ethics, her simple no-nonsense, common sense approach to governing. The most noticeable display of these attributes was her lone stand from the very beginning against the now defunct parking ordinance that caused such havoc. To her credit, she saw the implications from the very beginning and stood by herself which is not an easy thing to do in our position to the Ordinance. I do believe that Jill's time to assume a leadership role on this Council has come and probably overdue. I think Jill's style of leadership is exemplified in her actions on this Council. She provides a nice contrast to the style of leadership this Council is used to seeing but I believe that every bit as effective. Leadership by example is the best way to describe Jill Simpson.

She's not going to toot her own horn; she just does her job and get the job done. Any further comments? If not, Clerk please call the roll.

ROLL CALL – 8 Calabrese, 3 Simpson

President Rheault – Eight Cecilia Calabrese, three Jill Simpson. You have elected as the Vice President Councilor Calabrese. Congratulations to both Councilor Letellier and to Councilor Calabrese. Any further discussion from the Council? ...my big Agenda here...No other business in front of the Council. Any other matter that may legally come before the Council? If not, we'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

Clerk – Excuse me, Don? Are you supposed to...

President Rheault – Oh, I'm sorry, she didn't have a hat, she's got an envelope. This is the drawing of the seats. He's lucky he always get an end seat...shuffle them, shuffle them...

(off microphone talking and shuffling and rearranging of the seats)

Item 9. Public Hearings

Item 10. Old Business

Item 11. New Business

Item 12. Any other matter that may legally come before the City Council.

President Rheault – Okay, it's been suggested to go back, if I may, to go back to Item 12. I did not give the opportunity to each member to speak. So I'll start at my furthest right from Councilor Perry.

Councilor Perry – Yes, thank you, Mr. President, or past president. I just want to welcome the Council. I look forward to the next two years of working with you. Council President Elect, I want to say congratulations to you Gina and CeCe. Congratulations. We look forward to the leadership. I want to welcome Paul and Jill to the Council. I look forward to working with both of you over the next two years and uh, let's get ready. Thanks.

Councilor Messick – Hi, um congratulations first to Gina and CeCe and um, thank you Mr. Rheault all the work that you've done on the Council for many, many, many years. I also am very, very pleased to be here. It's an honor and a privilege. I don't think I ever got to thank everyone who did vote for me, my family, my friends and my campaign committee. And I am very excited to be here and very eager to roll up my sleeves and get to work. Thank you. Oh, and Happy New Year!

President Rheault – Thank you. Councilor Bitzas?

Councilor Bitzas – Thank you, Mr. Past President. I'd like to thank you for all your years of service. Also I'd like to congratulate Gina and Cecilia and welcome the two new members. And we all together, we must work together for the best interest of our Town and I hope and I believe we'll do so. And uh, to the other people who are watching us, the new year start, I wish you all a Happy New Year, and healthy one and good luck to our Town. Thank you.

President Rheault – Councilor Young?

Councilor Young – Yes, thank you. I guess first, I congratulate the newly elected President and Vice President, colleagues for a long time and I'm glad to welcome you to the spotlight. Also, thank my good friend, Don Rheault, for all his leadership over the years and I know we're counting on that to continue as well. Welcome our new members, Jill and Paul, good luck and uh, one more congratulations to our new Mayor and uh, I know we're all very hopeful of uh, an exciting two years, so thank you.

President Rheault – Thank you, Councilor Calabrese?

Councilor Calabrese – Yes, um, thank you for those of you who supported my for Vice President and I'm very proud to be part of the new leadership team here in Agawam along with Councilor Letellier and um, I certainly learned a great deal from Councilor Rheault and Councilor Simpson and from all of you who have preceded me onto the Council and I welcome Paul and Jill. I think we're gonna have a really exciting two years and I'm looking forward to getting to work.

President Rheault – Councilor Letellier. I'm sorry. Madam President?

Councilor Letellier – That's fine. I'd like to thank everyone on the Council for their support. I know that we all intend to work well together regardless of who you voted for. We're all here for the right reasons. I want to congratulate and just say publicly on the record how much I respect Councilor Rheault's years as a Councilor and as a President. I, this is not about disrespecting his service. This is about some innovations that I think is the right time to put into place and now that I see that Councilor Rheault, President Rheault, is the oldest member serving on the Council, I have a right hand and a left hand that I know that I can trust and go to for advice. So I'm very pleased to see that he'll be sitting up here next to me.

President Rheault – Just don't swing.

Councilor Letellier – I won't. I'm a righty, not a lefty. When Congressman Neal spoke yesterday, he talked about how important it is that people feel that the process has treated them fairly. And that will, I guarantee that that will happen in front of me. I believe that the process that's most important that everyone needs to feel that they're being treated fairly. So friend or foe, whether I agree with your proposal or not, everyone will have a fair shake. Please let CeCe and I know which committees you're interested in serving on.

If there's something that you really, really want more than anything else, if there's a Chairship that you really want, we'll be happy to accommodate that as best as we can. And we'll try to get the committee information out in Thursday's packet if we can, so you have week in advance to know what your chairs are. I'm going to give Barbara my business card to give out in the next packet. You'll have my home number, my cell number, my office number. I have email. I have a great secretary who's at the office most of the time. And she is aware that I have been running for this position and she's willing to do whatever needs to be done. If it's a day that Barbara's not there or Barbara has to leave at 3:00, we can still get some things accomplished. And um, just again thank you, welcome to our new Councilors and I look forward to serving with everyone. Thank you.

President Rheault – Councilor Rossi?

Councilor Rossi – Thank you. I would like to welcome Jill and Paul to the Council and I would like to say that each member of the Council here has something unique to bear to this body and I know that we're going to get a lot accomplished. I congratulate Gina and CeCe for the positions and my vote for Don in no way diminishes that their capacity to sit there. As I mentioned I thought that everyone here has a unique capacity to bring and I've enjoyed working with both these ladies on several committees over the years and we've got a lot accomplished. And I appreciate the opportunity of having been able to work with you people. I admire your abilities and your strengths in those capacities and I thought you did well. Don, I want to thank Don for his, his Council Presidentship over the year, guidance and moderator over the years of this panel. I think his length of service exemplifies a tremendous giving of himself to the community. I don't think I could really do justice to what Richard Theroux mentioned at the swearing in ceremonies. I thought he did it quite amply and articulately. So again, uh, I'm looking forward to where I'll be working with everybody and getting started and I know we're gonna have a good couple of years ahead us. So, thank you.

President Rheault – Thank you Bob. Oh, yes, Councilor Cavallo? It's easy to see you in the same seat only a different position.

Councilor Cavallo – Yes it's true. I have the same seat that I had when I was on the School Committee. First of all, I'd like to congratulate CeCe and Gina, rich rewards and good luck to you. And I'd also like to mention Don, also, with your experience I'm sure that's gonna be a great help to both Gina and CeCe. You've been around for a long time and hopefully there'll be some plusses there as well. I look forward to working with the rest of the Council. Having served four years on the School Committee I know that many times they'll be disagreements and sometimes we will not necessarily see eye to eye but I've also learned being on the School Committee for four years, that you have to bite the bullet sometimes and you move on. And that's the way it operates, but again as some of you mentioned this evening, we're all here for the same purpose. When I was on the School Committee, the purpose was for the kids, and for the staff and for the community. Well the same thing here, it's for the community, for the people that put us in this office, the people that put their trust and faith in us and made us one of the top eleven people to

serve here. So again, I hope that I can lend some of my expertise, my background, having been on the School Committee for four years, and also having been an educator, I was going to mention to our new President later on, that certainly I would like to become involved in the probably the education sub-committee but I won't say too much about that now. But uh, again, I hope all of us can reach that goal and preserve the continuity that we need here on the Council to do well for the Town. Again, thank you and I look forward to working with all of you.

President Rheault – Thank you, Councilor Mineo?

Councilor Mineo – Yea, I'd like to congratulate Gina and CeCe. Uh, I think you'll do a good job. I'd also like to thank President Rheault, you did a great job over the last four years and I would like to welcome Jill Messick and Paul Cavallo to the Council. Uh, I think they're gonna do a great job and I think we're all gonna work well together. Thank you.

President Rheault – Councilor Simpson?

Councilor Simpson – Thank you. I'd like to say congratulations to CeCe and Gina. And also I'd like to thank Don for the kind words on his nomination speech. That was very nice of you. Thank you very much. And um, I think we need to be known as Jill S. and Jill M. so there's no confusion 'cuz everyone kept saying welcome to Jill... So other than that, thank you and Happy New Year to everybody.

President Rheault – Thank you. Well, obviously it's been a great ride for me and I thank each of you for the kind words. And I'm not going anywhere, I'm staying here so I'll be available to anybody at any given time. I congratulate both Gina and CeCe and wish them the best of luck. There's a voice on the left side of you both that would be more than happy to help you in any given situation if necessary but I don't think I'll need that. The... a lot has been accomplished in my tenure and I appreciate the support the Council, several Councils have given that made my job easier. And as recent as this year when I had the opportunity to spend three full days training our new Clerk and I think she has exemplified what a smart girl she is, young lady I should say, but I've known her since she was a young girl so I can get away with that. She is extremely beneficial to this Council and will make all our jobs a lot easier because she does excel and uh, I take a lot of pride in being a part of that. And to each of you, I will be here and let's see, now this is my twenty-first year, starting as a Councilor and I served twelve as Council President which some may say that's long enough, and others obviously may not. But from the bottom of my heart, Agawam is my town. I've lived here for sixty-five years roughly and that's what puts me in this seat, being the oldest. So I look forward to each of you, I wish you all a Happy New Year, and a spirit of cooperation between us and the new Mayor. I think a motion to adjourn is in order. Moved by Councilor Simpson, seconded by Councilor Rossi. Any further discussion? If not, all those in favor of adjourning? Opposed? We are not adjourned. Thank you and good evening.

Adjournment.

